



Packaging Juice at Retail

Recently, there has been an increase in the consumer demand for fresh, unprocessed juice products. It is entirely reasonable that businesses would arise to meet this increased demand. However, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), “Juices provide many essential nutrients, but consuming untreated juices can pose health risks to your family. The FDA has received reports of serious outbreaks of foodborne illness that have been traced to drinking fruit and vegetable juice and cider that has not been treated to kill harmful bacteria”. This guidance document is intended to make juice producers aware of these often unforeseen, yet potentially serious health hazards.

Bottled juicing operations that wholesale their juice to other businesses, distribute interstate, or make any type of health claim would be regulated by the FDA not by Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (Department). Juicing operations that process fresh juice for immediate customer consumption or for bottling to be delivered from a retail food operation directly to their customers are considered retail food operations and would be regulated by the Department, not FDA.

Even when all prudent precautions are taken, there exist distinct and potentially serious health hazards associated with bottling unpasteurized juices. The Department strongly recommends that these products go through a pasteurization process or be otherwise treated to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness. If untreated, the consumer must be made aware of the hazards associated with consuming the unpasteurized juice and to allow customers to make their own informed decision.

The 2009 FDA Food Code requires fresh fruit or vegetable juices that are packaged at retail to be processed under HACCP with a 5 log reduction in pathogens of concern OR bear the warning statement as specified in 21 CFR Section 101.17(g). That statement is: “WARNING: This product has not been pasteurized and, therefore, may contain harmful bacteria that can cause serious illness in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems.” This warning statement must appear on the container of unpasteurized juice itself.

Food establishments that serve a highly susceptible population (e.g. assisted living facilities, child/adult care facilities, hospitals/nursing homes, senior centers, etc.) cannot serve prepackaged juice that bears the warning label and they must serve only pasteurized juice. For juice only, this population includes children who are age 9 or less and receive food in a school, day care setting, or similar facility that provides custodial care.

Please refer to the following resources for more information on handling requirements for juice:

[Maricopa County Environmental Health Code](#)

[Safe Juice Bottling Operations Guidelines](#)

[Juice Bottling FDA Code References](#)

For more than 50 years, Maricopa County Environmental Services department has been working with our community to ensure a safe and healthy environment. The department serves the nation's fourth largest county with a population of nearly 4 million people. Using innovative methods, our Environmental Health professionals take proactive steps to regulate the food safety in eating and drinking establishments, work with stakeholders to keep our water supply free from contamination, and provide surveillance/enforcement activities to help minimize vector borne health risks.

